

# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

CENTRAL REGION - PLANNING

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September 21, 2004

Ms. Alice Ruby  
Board President  
Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference  
3300 Arctic Boulevard, Suite 203  
Anchorage, AK 99503

Subject: Comments on Draft Revision to Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan

Dear Ms. Ruby:

Thank you for your letter of July 30, 2004 concerning a revision to the Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan. As you are aware, the Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan is being revised in response to a recent court order that directed the Department to halt all work on the Iliamna-Nondalton road and bridge project until the economic costs and benefits are considered in the next revision of the Southwest Plan. We are undertaking such a revision, extracting two projects from the previously defined baseline for the Southwest Plan, the Iliamna-Nondalton and the Dillingham-Aleknagik corridor projects, and subjecting them to the evaluation process used to assess other projects in the Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan.

In your letter you state your support for the Iliamna-Nondalton Road/Bridge Project and the Aleknagik/Wood River Bridge Project. SWAMC's support for these projects is noted.

Your letter also recommends that more elaboration on the benefits of these projects be included in the Plan. The Executive Summary of the Plan includes recommendations for community linkages that provide the greatest near-term benefit. The descriptions for the Iliamna-Nondalton Road and for the Dillingham-Aleknagik Road and Wood River Bridge will be expanded to include additional discussion of the benefits you've identified. However it should be noted that the focus of the Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan is to describe a system of transportation linkages that, over time, will improve the ability of persons and freight to move to and from and within the region. Its purpose is not to document in detail the justification for every project included within it. More detailed project justification will occur as projects move through the STIP and project-level planning and environmental processes.

Your letter also notes that freight costs presented in the documents were collected in 1999 and that costs have increased, in some cases dramatically, since that time. This will be reflected in the text and tables of the final Revised Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan.

Thank you again for your input.

Sincerely,



Allen Kemplen, AICP  
Southwest Area Planner

/eh